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ABSTRACT

This case study documents the pedagogical changes an inner city, secondary school humanities teacher made as she attempted to improve the quality of her students' educational experience. Data were gathered in the 1989-90 school year. The teacher had explored what had happened to her as a good conventional teacher, to her pedagogy, her curriculum, and her relationship with their students and colleagues as she and her fellow team members worked to incorporate the nine Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools into her classroom. The first section describes her students and their voices in relation to a field trip to a law firm in which they focused on the question, What is justice? It also presents the teacher's reflection on her conventional classroom and describes the innovative school environment created by the participation in the Coalition of Essential Schools, examining the teacher's role. The second section presents a day in her classroom in the new environment, looking at the daily advisory session, teacher planning time, and the humanities block. The third section presents reflections on changing practice, discussing factors that supported change (e.g., the rich collaborative learning environment for teachers and being allowed to start slowly) and factors that hindered change (e.g., learning to collaborate with others and dealing with changed relationships with students). Overall, the teacher believed that the nine Common Principles played a major part in her reorganization of instruction. The nine Common Principles are attached. (Contains 14 endnotes.) (SM)

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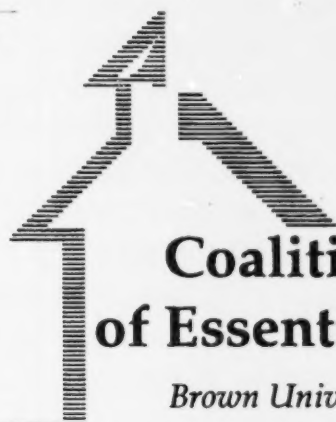
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Coalition of Essential Schools

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Trusting Kids and Their Voices

A Humanities Teacher in the Midst of Change

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STUDIES ON TEACHER CHANGE (No. 2)

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PART I

Teaching as Facilitating Learning

"For me, the hardest part of changing was — learning to trust kids and their own voices," said Kathryn Montague,¹ reflecting on her twenty-one-year journey from "conventional" teacher to teacher-as-coach.² Trusting students and their voices for Kathryn meant a clear pedagogical shift. She had recently learned to believe more fully in her students' intellectual capacity and to respect their personal integrity as she watched them become more engaged in their own learning. Kathryn was in the process of exploring what had happened to her as a good conventional teacher, to her pedagogy, her curriculum, and her relationships to students and colleagues as she and her fellow team members worked to incorporate the nine Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools³ into her classroom.

We were on the subway headed back to the Westgate High School, a small inner-city school, after a field trip to a downtown law firm with Kathryn's students. This particular trip was one of the activities in the integrated curriculum that Kathryn and her fellow team members had developed as part of the year-long humanities course for ninth- and tenth-grade students centering on the essential question, What is justice? She had contacted this law firm in hopes that they might establish an enduring partnership. She hoped that these students would be able to work well with the attorneys who had agreed to participate so that by the time they were seniors, those who would like to become lawyers might be able to do internships at the firm.

If learning to trust students' voices had been her greatest challenge, Kathryn had certainly come a long way. Her students had just demonstrated the clarity and the authority of their voices in an exchange with eight seasoned attorneys on complex legal issues and procedures in the American judicial system. Kathryn had said almost nothing during the entire two-and-a-half-hour visit.

KIDS' VOICES

Kathryn's fifteen students ranged in age from thirteen to sixteen; they were racially mixed and

displayed typical teenage hormonal hysteria — some were four foot six while others loomed six foot two. The only specific instructions to the students prior to their meeting with the attorneys had been given outside of the tall building that housed the law firm. Kathryn stopped, pierced the kids with her most direct gray-green gaze, and announced, "No gum and no hats. Got it?" The kids shuffled, hats came off. Some swallowed their gum; a few chewed surreptitiously.

Once inside the elegant offices, two attorneys met the students to take them on a tour of the various departments within the firm. They visited the huge word-processing department where they experimented with a Lexus database which could access records of any court case on any subject from the Supreme Court register or from the state law register. The kids entered "statutory rape" into the computer, since there had been a recent case of rape in their neighborhood. A list of all the statutory rape cases appeared on the screen by case number and date. They walked through the library, which was organized around a series of moveable stacks. They toured the accounting department and the copy center. Each of the departments was large and full of people working busily.

The students were then ushered into an imposing boardroom with a long mahogany table, leather chairs, a wet bar, and a big window overlooking the city; a buffet lunch was set up at one end. Kathryn, who had not said a word since our arrival in the offices, grinned. Her face was radiant with excitement. She whispered to me that the kids were learning all kinds of things: they were seeing a variety of possible careers; they were experiencing the city at work; they were seeing the kinds of technological support systems that have become crucial to our society. She couldn't talk fast enough in her excitement.

While the kids ate lunch, she worked. She talked with one attorney about their plans to do mock trials in which the firm had agreed to participate. The attorney asked about the kids. Kathryn noted that they came mostly from impoverished families, many of which were very troubled. Still, she bristled a bit when the

attorney made a big fuss about the kids' abilities in the face of these difficulties. Kathryn believed in these kids in a way that was not soft — which did not excuse them because of their circumstances but which demonstrated her certainty that they were capable of anything they put their minds to.

After lunch, the senior attorney suggested that they might start with a discussion on legal proceedings. One of the students opened by asking how poor people could get legal representation. Kathy, one of the guides on the earlier tour, explained that their firm, like most others, did *pro bono* work. She gave the kids a definition. The students pushed. How much *pro bono* work did they do? Who decided what cases they would take? How did someone contact them in order to gain access to the attorneys in this firm? Finally Tyrone, who had asked the original question, said, "Well, I got myself a lawyer!" Everyone had a good laugh.

A meaty discussion ensued. The senior attorney asked the students what they knew about legal proceedings. The kids described the two kinds of law — civil and criminal — and explained court procedures. They described the players, too. A woman attorney asked why the prosecution went first in the courtroom. The kids explained by describing opening comments and what should be included in them and how the prosecution set the stage. The attorneys elaborated. One noted that a tremendous amount of work goes into the preparation of the trial. A student asked, "Why do trials take so long?" Another asked, "What is a hung jury, and what is a mistrial, and what is the difference?" The senior attorney straightened his tie, cleared his throat, and observed that the kids were asking excellent questions, and hard ones at that. One of his colleagues fielded the questions about trials. "Who determines whether a case is subject to state jurisdiction or federal jurisdiction?" another student asked. The lawyers looked at each other and laughed; one attorney remarked that these kids wasted no time getting to the heart of the matter. Then he went on to explain, indicating that this was a troublesome issue, but noting that the prosecution usually made the determination based on the government's best interests.

During the discussion, the students did not raise their hands but spoke out in turn, as the attorneys did, giving way when they overlapped. The whole group was respectful and attentive. The attorneys asked the kids to speak up and to identify themselves as they spoke, which they did. When

several students appeared to dominate the discussion, the senior attorney asked to hear from those who had not yet spoken, and the more verbal students held back. Mark, a ninth grader who wanted to be an attorney, asked what proportion of their time was spent in preparation for a case compared to the time spent in the courtroom. The attorneys gave a variety of examples, citing different types of cases. The lawyers asked the kids about plea-bargaining. One student explained, "It's designed to relieve the courts because they are so overbooked." Another added, "People can negotiate the plea outside of the courtroom so that they move toward getting what both parties want."

The students asked more questions. "In drug cases, who determines whether it will be a federal or state case?" "Does losing a case have anything to do with an attorney's salary?" Everyone laughed again. The lawyers asked the kids if they knew what contingency fees were. A student answered, "If you win, you gets the money; if you loses, you don't get nothing." Everyone erupted in laughter again. The kid grinned.

After an hour and fifteen minutes, Kathryn reminded the group that their time was running out and that she would like them to conclude the conversation with some discussion of closing comments. One of the girls noted that it was in the closing statements that people asked for what they wanted as an outcome of the trial. One of the boys said it was a terrific time to ask for all kinds of money and to reflect on the American way of life, apple pie, that kind of stuff. The entire group laughed again, and the senior attorney said with good humor that there was not much more they could add.

The students stood up, thanking the attorneys for the lunch and for the conversation. The attorneys told the kids that they looked forward to seeing them in court for their mock trials and congratulated them on their excellent preparation. The kids chatted with individual attorneys, pursuing questions of interest or explaining the cases they were working on as they filed out of the room.

As the students left, the attorneys were visibly surprised and delighted by the visit. They commented that this must be an exceptional group of kids. Kathryn replied that these were ordinary kids, but that all kids can be exceptional given an environment where they can really sink their teeth into good learning. She made arrangements to call one of the attorneys to finalize plans for the

mock trials. Kathy said that she would like to come out to their classroom to help the kids with their preparation. "Anytime," Kathryn replied. "We could use you!"

The kids were jubilant on the way home. They knew they had done a good job, that they had made a good showing. Kathryn, visibly pleased with them, relaxed her business-like demeanor. Her face softened, and as the subway carried us uptown, she moved back in time to describe her teaching experience before she came to Westgate.

REFLECTIONS ON A CONVENTIONAL CLASSROOM

Kathryn taught for eighteen years in a large comprehensive junior high school in the heart of one of the largest cities in the United States. She was an English teacher, and like the other 120 teachers in her building, she taught five classes a day of forty-five minutes each. She had 175 students a day, an average of 35 students in each class. During the time allotted, she attempted to impart to her students an appreciation of the great works of literature — American and European — a task for which she had been prepared in countless literature classes, both undergraduate and graduate. In addition, she hoped to teach them to write clearly, to read critically, and to express themselves well. Kathryn loved her students and got a great deal of pleasure from working with them.

The organization of the school was much like other comprehensive schools across the country. The school day was controlled by bells, which signaled the beginning and the end of each class. Each teacher taught in his or her own classroom. For the most part Kathryn worked alone, without much contact with her peers. Except for passing in the halls, bolting sandwiches during their thirty-minute lunch break, or attending infrequent staff meetings, she seldom saw her colleagues and rarely talked with them. "I was always conscious of the bell. Do I have ten minutes of motivation? Do I have enough time to go over the homework? I was always just racing and watching, looking; the kids started shuffling their books before the end of class and I could tell they were not focused on what I was talking about. I was focused on the management of it all." Despite the time constraints, she carefully planned her lessons in advance and had the plans ready in case the administrators wished to see them, as they occasionally did.

Kathryn believed that she was a good teacher. She worked well with students. She invested a good deal of energy in preparing and conducting her lessons. She had been given every indication that she was good by her administrators. While the administrators seemed distant to Kathryn, "I knew I was doing a good job because I always got an S [satisfactory] on my review, and because I was left alone a lot of the time — the administration didn't bother me." Her attendance records were up to date, and she managed all of the requisite custodial tasks well. Furthermore, the administrators frequently let her know when special programs were available — a show of their confidence in her. As a result, she participated over the years in several special programs. "I was happy when new programs came into the school. Nobody else wanted them; nobody else cared about them. I think they thought, 'Ah, that crazy lady down the hall, she's doing that Shakespeare program again.'"

These programs constituted the bulk of Kathryn's professional development — they influenced the way she taught far more than the university courses she took to maintain her credentials. Kathryn was involved in a program to bring Shakespeare to life, a law program, a program to break down stereotypes in both sex and race. She was involved with a poets-in-residence program and a program to determine the effects of stress on students' lives. All of these programs brought lay people into her classroom and enabled her to take her students out of the classroom and into other workplaces. Each added both to the course content and to her pedagogical skills. She actively pursued these kinds of improvement opportunities over the years.

Life behind Kathryn's classroom door demonstrated good conventional teaching practices. Her classroom was arranged so that she sat in the front of the room. "There were wonderful bulletin boards," she recalled, posters with lofty quotes from great American philosophers, which she got from other teachers who left or from school trade stores. The students' desks were arranged in rows. "Sometimes the desks were arranged singly in rows, sometimes in twos — depending on the year. I had a series of textbooks, usually not enough. Grammar books, literature books, series. I followed the textbook through the year, so the lesson would consist of whatever page we were up to at that point. I put some examples on the board, I discussed

several points, then I would see if the kids could do it on their own. Then they got an assignment. I lectured a good deal. They wrote. Sometimes they'd ask a question. Active student participation was minimal, because I believed that the sign of a good class was a quiet class. Once in a while, we would do group reading that would involve reading a piece of literature together. Sometimes, some years, I'd have workbooks, and groups of kids would work on a particular task.

"I began my lessons by having them write down in their notebooks whatever I was teaching for the day. Then I would explain, and they'd either do a sample in their notebook or we'd look at the text and do something together from the textbook or a worksheet. Each student worked independently. I corrected their drafts, then they would recopy them and hand them back in. I believed that my professional responsibility was to cover the material, to prepare the kids for state exams, to make sure they had practiced for their reading test — and my students did well." She called parents when something was wrong.

Kathryn had two children of her own during the course of those eighteen years and felt that she had orchestrated her life so that she could both work and parent successfully. "It was very convenient for me in terms of my family. If I needed to go home, I could."

While the working conditions remained fairly constant over time, Kathryn described other changes that caused her eventually to feel dissatisfied. When she had first gone to that school, it had been a very exciting place. "I was a politically active person. Decentralization was just starting and it was very exciting. We [the teachers in her department] formed a curriculum support group and developed a nice camaraderie. They were a tremendous source of support; we were there for each other."

Unfortunately, that faded. "Everything changes. The administration changed several times, and I was becoming increasingly dissatisfied with my job. Enrollment declined to six hundred kids and fifty staff. Everything was a battle. People were reined in in their jobs. To get a bus pass, you had to smile at the right time; to get paper, you had to know the supply guy; and I did — I'd worked there long enough, I'd paid my dues. But the focus was on discipline, keeping the kids in line. It is the bureaucracy that strangles you. People were not interested in teaching, they were interested in

holding outside jobs, not making waves, getting out at three. You couldn't get close to the time clock at three o'clock, the line was so long. The administration did not force collaboration. It became divisive. Then it became blacks versus whites — and that was the worst."

In her fifteenth year, the superintendent heard of Kathryn's dissatisfaction. He asked her to start a mini-school. She and two other teachers were offered the opportunity to set up the kind of school they thought would produce better learning. "It was very exciting to me. I could order my own materials; we were told we could hire who we wanted, we could really work together. We could celebrate kids' birthdays, take kids to the theatre! We had one floor within a regular school building. I can't tell you the ideas we had. We spent the whole summer just planning and calling and writing and setting things up in the classes — it was very exciting, very exciting. The problem was that the superintendent just wanted someone to start a mini-school, and he really had no intention of giving support. He was an interesting guy; I'm glad he gave us the opportunity, but he didn't help us. So, we couldn't survive. The rest of the school was very hostile to us, and that changed it. We found out we couldn't hire who we wanted. People were transferred in who couldn't be put anywhere else. These people had no idea what it was we were trying to accomplish, and they didn't want any part of it." It was at this point that Kathryn had decided that she needed a change. So she began looking for ways to stir the chalkdust.

Like many other practicing teachers in the United States today, Kathryn felt a diminishing sense of satisfaction in her work. She recognized that the goals she had once believed possible — helping students to appreciate great literature, to write well, to express themselves well — seemed unrealistic and unattainable in the midst of her large comprehensive school. And, like countless others, believing that she would have little luck stirring the chalkdust in any real or meaningful way, she began entertaining notions of a career change. She had spent hours trying to determine what she could do besides teach, when a friend outside the school system recommended that she apply for a job in another of the city's schools that had developed a reputation for innovation. Kathryn didn't know much about the school but applied on the strength of her friend's enthusiasm and was hired.

AN INNOVATIVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT

When Kathryn arrived at Westgate, she learned that it was one of the founding schools in the Coalition of Essential Schools partnership and that Westgate had been working on incorporating the Coalition's nine Common Principles for two years. The school seemed to provide just the kind of environment Kathryn was looking for, so rather than leave education altogether, she moved her files of good lessons across the city to her new classroom.

At the time of my visit, Kathryn was in her third year at Westgate, her twenty-first as a public school teacher. Westgate was an alternative school located in a moderately poor neighborhood, a school of choice in a large urban school district. The student population was 40 percent African-American, 40 percent Hispanic, and 20 percent other. As an Essential school, Westgate focused on helping young people learn to use their minds well, stressing that students should be the workers.⁴ It emphasized personalization and the mastery of a limited number of centrally important skills and areas of knowledge. It promoted high expectations, trust, a sense of personal decency, and a respect for diversity.

The school was divided into "houses"⁵ of about seventy-five students each. Each house had an interdisciplinary faculty which worked exclusively with the students in that house. Each staff member also took responsibility for the social and emotional welfare of about fifteen student advisees. Students in grades seven through ten studied a common core curriculum, with three classes per day — humanities, mathematics/science, and an advisory period. Each student also participated in a community service project. Additional subjects — languages, music, physical education, and library skills — were offered before and after school. An intramural physical education program was offered at lunchtime in addition to library, music, and gym, among other educational options. A typical student schedule looked something like this:

8:00 – 9:00	Spanish/Library
9:00 – 11:00	Humanities
11:00 – 1:00	Math/Science
1:00 – 2:00	Lunch/Recreational Activities
2:00 – 3:00	Advisory
3:00 – 5:00	Daily Extended Options

Students were grouped in two-grade blocks — seventh and eighth, ninth and tenth, eleventh and twelfth. Kathryn, as a humanities teacher, worked with three teachers on a team that took responsibility for the ninth/tenth humanities curriculum. Kathryn had two two-hour humanities classes and an advisory period each day. Each Tuesday morning, while the students were working at various projects in the community, she and her humanities colleagues planned and refined the curriculum. Kathryn's typical daily schedule looked like this:

8:00 – 9:00	Meetings and Planning
9:00 – 11:00	Humanities (first group)
11:00 – 1:00	Humanities (second group)
1:00 – 2:00	Lunch
2:00 – 3:00	Advisory
3:00 – 3:30	Meetings and Planning

More often than not, the teachers worked together through the lunch hour. On Friday mornings at 8:00, the advisory team met to plan activities and to discuss students' progress and support. The whole school faculty joined together in weekly meetings to participate in shared decision-making about the governance of the school. In addition, teachers conducted two hour-long conferences with the parents of each of their students during the course of the year.

Resources were allocated in some uncommon ways in this school. Each of the teams — the teaching teams and the house teams — was given a budget with which they could plan during the course of the year. Kathryn noted that the teachers had moved away from dependency on textbooks. "We use pieces of the texts sometimes. We use novels. We use all kinds of materials. We write stuff. I have brought in stuff from the Legal Outreach program I did at my old school." In addition, the teachers were each given \$250 for supplies and, rather than spending the money independently, Kathryn's team had collaboratively planned what they needed and who would order what.

Furthermore, the school was organized to reduce the bureaucratic impediments teachers normally face. There was a copy machine on each floor. Teachers were not required to document how many copies they made or when. A telephone was available for use across the hall from Kathryn's classroom. A teacher-coordinator was on full-time release from the classroom to provide support to

the seventh/eighth-grade team and to the ninth/tenth-grade team.

As the coordinator, Mary Wells filled a variety of roles. "I make sure that each teacher in the group has the materials, knows what they're doing, why they are doing it, that they get support when they need it. I run team meetings, do proposals and agendas ahead of time so that people can think about it." Mary functioned as the liaison between the two humanities teams in the house to ensure consistency for students as they moved from seventh through tenth grade.

Mary's other major responsibility was to help teachers who had just come on board. While most of those who joined the staff at Westgate were experienced teachers, few of them had had the opportunity to function as "generalists."⁶ At Westgate, the humanities teachers taught writing, language arts, history, civics, geography, and expression. Michael Thompson was new to the team that year and had never taught English before. Mary read all of Michael's first round of student papers. The two of them worked together on his comments to the kids. Mary noted that the teachers worked together all the time, not just once or twice a year during an evaluation, that they had established an on-going process of building a better support system for teachers.

Finally, the administrators in Kathryn's school were seen as partners with the teachers in the educational endeavor. "I see the administrators as a source of help. Their concerns are very much focused on how teachers and kids grow. And they are always accessible to me." Kathryn described her principal, Rebecca Hoffman, as "a very stimulating person. She keeps me going. She keeps asking questions. Her own perspective is light-years ahead of where I am, so she makes me think about things. Most of the time, she's really interested in deepening our thought, which is very valuable — for the kids, for us. She has a wonderful way of putting things."

Kathryn cited the most recent example of Rebecca's role in moving them forward. During a faculty meeting Rebecca pointed out that everyone became extremely tense around grading periods. The comments on the reports sounded very much like the standard, rather empty phrases she used to write on report cards when she was teaching. As she reviewed the reports, she felt that teachers seemed to revert to old behaviors during times of high stress. As a result of Rebecca's insight, the

faculty grew to understand that they must push themselves to be more communicative in the reports home — that they must push forward instead of reverting back.

The principal's office, a converted classroom, was across the hall from Kathryn's room, right in the midst of a number of classrooms. The administrators did not evaluate teachers. Rather, they rearranged the schedule so that teachers had time to work together to examine both curriculum and pedagogy.

Kathryn's Role

Kathryn perceived her professional role of teacher-as-coach to be focused on facilitating the best possible learning circumstance for each student. "My professional responsibility is to really examine what's happening for each kid." That meant knowing her students very well and assuming a variety of responsibilities in order to ensure that each student could learn. Therefore, her schedule was organized so that she dealt with only about forty-five students each day. She walked kids through all kinds of problem-solving situations to ensure that they would be able to focus and to concentrate.

She was also responsible for fifteen advisees — students with whom she became very close. It was her job to know these students well and to become a trusted adult for them, to help them learn to cope with the daily complexity of both school and adolescence. Kathryn saw them frequently and was very aware of their particular concerns, problems, and strengths. During my visit, she took one of her advisees out shopping on a Saturday to replace the student's coat, which had been stolen. She knew most of her students' parents and was in frequent contact with them.

Kathryn's role in the school was complex. As a humanities teacher, she was expected to be a generalist, with responsibility for writing, language arts, history, civics, geography, and expression. The curriculum for the year was organized to consider the question, What is justice? Kathryn built curricular units that included activities in all of the disciplines mentioned — not as discrete activities in geography, history, etc., but as blended activities so that students could see the interconnections.

Kathryn also supervised student teachers, organized field trips, and was the house team leader for her unit — half of the ninth/tenth-

grade team. She taught writing on computers and helped students to develop keyboarding skills. She was responsible for attending humanities team meetings, whole faculty meetings, and house meetings. She said in partial despair, "When I came to work at this school, I came to attend meetings!" Recently, she had been asked to travel to different schools across the country to conduct staff development activities for other teachers interested in changing their working circumstances.

Kathryn, now in her mid-forties, had been married to her attorney husband for twenty-two years. They had two teenage daughters. She spoke frequently of her family with great affection and occasionally mentioned the conflict she experienced between caring for her home family and caring for her school family. She noted that changing roles for women posed challenges — which could certainly be weathered but which were challenges nonetheless.

PART II

A Day in Kathryn's Classroom

Standing in her classroom — she almost never sat down — Kathryn was a small woman with the voice control of an actress, quiet and personal at times, conversational at others, commanding when necessary. She had dark brown hair layered softly around her face and falling to her shoulders. Her large gray-green eyes dominated her face. She opened them very wide when she meant serious business and pierced students with intense, straightforward eye contact. She had robust mannerisms, quick and staccato speech patterns: "Focus, focus, focus! Jimmy, you left your hat on. There are ladies in here. Come on, now. No time to waste. Let's focus!"

Despite her small stature, her quick and decisive movements gave her a commanding presence. She was confident without being arrogant. She laughed easily and, in softer moments, communicated a strong sense of caring. She frequently linked arms with students and fellow staff members, as if to draw them deeper into personal conversation. She obviously cared deeply about the students and staff members with whom she worked.

Kathryn's room was in a ninety-year-old building and was painted a deep eggshell blue. The color — selected for its ability to blot out decades of scarring wear and tear — was harsh and cold. There was a bank of closets along one side of the room, one of which was locked. Across the room was a row of windows. The shades were pulled down over two of the windows, at half mast over two others. The windows were covered on the outside in thick wire mesh. Several large housing projects loomed beyond the windows. Vibrations from commuter trains rumbling past periodically shook the room.

Along the top of the board were five questions the Westgate faculty and staff had collaboratively devised to help their students develop good habits of mind during their years in the school:

- How do we know what we know?
- What's the evidence?
- How else might it be viewed, seen, considered?
- What's the viewpoint?
- What difference does it make?

On another wall was their essential question⁷ for the year: What is justice? This question provided the guiding focus behind everything they studied in their humanities block during the year.

Kathryn had arranged the room to accommodate several kinds of flexible groupings. "The main part of the room is a circle of desks for whole group instruction. I've tried to make three different work areas in the room: the round table in the back can accommodate four students, the rectangular table in the back is another, and the three chairs by my desk are another. But I need room for a fourth group." Kathryn threw up her hands as she wondered why she worried about the arrangements she'd made. "The kids move the desks where they want anyway!" She longed for a larger room and desks on wheels.

OFF TO A FLYING START

By the time I arrived in Kathryn's room at 8:15 on a winter morning, the day after our visit to the law office, she was already in the midst of her third meeting of the day. The first had been with her humanities team members; they had added an extra meeting to the day because they wanted to devote their regular planning session entirely to a discussion of mini-Exhibitions.⁸ The special meeting had been called to discuss a growing concern that their two-hour-block periods with their students were being eroded by interruptions and special activities. The group wanted to document how much time they had lost in recent weeks, in order to present a clear case to the staff concerned.

Kathryn's second meeting had been with her house advisory team. This cross-disciplinary group — one math/science teacher, two humanities teachers, an art teacher, and the resource room teacher — took responsibility for approximately eighty students. Their purpose was to pay particular attention to the emotional, physical, and intellectual well-being of their advisory students while they were in school. First, they discussed how they to raise money for their big annual trip. Each advisor took his or her students somewhere during the school year — usually to a university, so

the students could begin to think about what they might like to do and where they might want to go to college. Last year, Kathryn took her students to her own college in Massachusetts. This year she was thinking of taking them to Philadelphia.

Next, the teachers talked about arranging a trip to the local planetarium to see a new exhibit on "The Seven Wonders of the Universe." Outings were encouraged, and since several were already scheduled, they had to plan this particular trip for several weeks down the road.

Kathryn's third meeting of the morning was with Micki Sherman, her student teacher. Micki was in her last quarter of work before graduating with a degree in education but was struggling over whether to go ahead with a career in teaching. Her experience at Westgate had been very different from the usual student-teaching preparation, and she was not sure that she wanted to teach in a regular comprehensive high school.

Kathryn and Micki went over the student papers Micki had graded and reviewed the lesson Micki had taught the day before. The two appeared to have a good rapport — easy and supportive. Kathryn was encouraging, while offering constructive criticism.

As they finished, a student came in looking forlorn. He was tall, yet looked very young. Kathryn immediately turned her attention to him. "Hi, Charles. What's up?" They sat down at two desks. The student started to cry. Kathryn put her arms around him, while encouraging him to talk. He sobbed out that his grandfather, with whom he lived, had had a heart attack. He had been taken by ambulance to the hospital the night before, and Charles had no idea how he was. Mary Wells, the humanities coordinator, came in and joined them, while Micki ran off to find Charles's advisory teacher. The room was quiet and calm, full of caring for the student. Once found, the advisor helped Charles arrange a visit to the hospital and secured an excused absence for him.

THE DAILY ADVISORY SESSION (PART ONE)

As Charles was leaving, two teachers rushed into Kathryn's room, distraught because the second copy of the film of *To Kill a Mockingbird* was missing. Kathryn reassured them, checked their schedules, and pointed out that they could show the film to their students together. At this point, students began streaming in for a half-hour morning

advisory. (The usual hour-long advisory had been divided into two half-hour sessions at the beginning and the end of the day to accommodate meetings the art teacher had to attend.) Several students visited with Kathryn, who sat at a student desk in the large circle. The students called Kathryn by her first name, as they did all the teachers and administrators.

During the few minutes before class, the activity in the room intensified. The librarian popped in to tell Kathryn that he missed her — that he never saw her anymore. The art teacher stuck his head in to remind her of the schedule change. Kathryn asked a student whether he'd enjoyed doing his homework last night. He looked sheepish. Her eyes opened very wide, and she pierced him with a look. "I charge a lot for notebook rental space here, Frankie. One more time and you will be in heavy debt. Ask George. He knows." As he came up to pick up his notebook, she said, "Come on, Frankie, let's get with it. You can't get smarter when you leave your books here. They belong with you."

Kathryn addressed her advisory students, all of whom were in her humanities blocks. "Okay, you people. We have no time to waste. Focus, please! Please get your writing folders out and write what you intend to do today. We have a busy week, a busy schedule — no time to waste. Please focus and write silently for ten minutes." She was very brisk. On the blackboard was the schedule for the day:

1. Art/writing
2. Exhibition question #4
3. Bail discussion
4. Read short story on the Civil War

Kathryn moved purposefully around the room from student to student. She stopped beside two kids. "Gentlemen, if this conversation is not dedicated to what you are writing, I don't want to hear it. Focus. Focus."

After ten minutes, Kathryn asked the students to put their writing away. "Does anyone have any questions about what you will be doing this week?" She asked whether they had games this week. Several of the kids told her what was going on in their athletic programs. She asked two boys if they were nervous about a playoff game. One looked nonchalant; the other grinned and nodded. She wished them luck.

The discussion turned to *To Kill a Mockingbird*. She asked how many students had finished it.

Most raised their hands. One student turned to his neighbor and moaned, "How did you finish already? It's too long . . . too long." One of the kids observed that when Atticus went to Tom's house to tell his wife that Tom had been killed, she knew even before Atticus said anything. One of the girls snapped at him, "Well, Atticus took off his hat, that's how she knew. She just knew. People don't always have to say things. I know. I've had it happen to me." Discussion was lively, and the half hour passed quickly.

Kathryn closed the discussion by reminding the kids that they needed to watch their time, as they all had a major portion of their mini-Exhibition for the trimester due on Friday. She told them she was available to them if they were having difficulty. Some of the kids packed up and moved out, while others left their books but drifted out into the hallway to see their friends. She caught Adam on his way out. "Adam, your math book has been here for days." He responded, "I gots . . ."

"I gots? I gots?" Kathryn's eyes were very big. He grinned and took his book.

She grabbed Tommy, a learning-disabled student who spent part of his time in the resource room and part of his time mainstreamed into regular classes. "Tommy, on time for Spanish tomorrow, huh? It's important that you get there on time." He nodded on his way out.

TEACHERS' TIME TO PLAN

Because it was Tuesday, the humanities team of five teachers was scheduled to meet while their students were out doing community service work. Each interdisciplinary team had two and a half hours a week to work together to plan curriculum, develop instructional strategies, and build mini-Exhibitions to assess student performance. These meetings provided a rich source of professional growth and generally extended through the lunch hour. The group straggled into Mary's room. They pulled the desks into a small circle and moved quickly into substantive discussions which dealt frequently with difficult issues. They debriefed the field trip to the law firm. They shared articles on racism to enhance the study of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. They adjusted their instructional schedules to accommodate the PSATs.

The bulk of their discussion, however, involved the revision of the mini-Exhibitions they were creating to gauge student progress on the essential

question for the year, What is justice? They had generated the mini-Exhibitions earlier — a series of ten to fifteen exercises from which students would choose in order to demonstrate their growing understanding. The teachers discussed the specific wording of particular questions. They debated whether kids should be given more opportunity to create other approaches to the mini-Exhibitions, whether they should be limited in access to resources. They juggled the order of the questions, wondering whether they should build in complexity, à la Benjamin Bloom,⁹ or whether the questions should be of equal value and complexity. They discussed the number of questions and how different kinds of students respond to different quantities. They argued over the efficacy of creating both advanced questions and standard questions, and whether doing so would intentionally reduce the expectations for some of their students.

During the discussion of the mini-Exhibitions, the teachers ranged back and forth among the activities they were planning to do in class, the readings they had prepared and the evaluative exercises. They checked to determine whether they were actually teaching what students needed in order to complete the mini-Exhibitions. One question asked students to determine whether jails administer justice. This led the teachers into a discussion of whether they would go ahead with a proposed visit to a prison. Kathryn spoke passionately against the trip. She had gone to a nearby correctional institution with a group of teachers; they had been shown clean rooms and inmates watching color TV, eating three regular meals a day, playing basketball. Kathryn's fear was that many of the students might miss the major point — that the inmates were confined, restricted — because the living conditions were so much better than those of many of the kids. The teachers talked about whether the kids should be allowed to suggest unreal punishments (punishments not currently admissible under our legal system) or whether they should deal only within the realm of the legally possible.

A good deal of time was spent on what topics students should be allowed to examine. Each of the teachers in turn suggested and defended particular topics. Two teachers felt strongly that kids should deal with murder cases. Others thought they should be allowed to choose. Kathryn, after listening carefully, suggested that they broaden the questions so that students might deal with

crimes of discrimination, involving rape, race, gender, and class.

Work continued through the lunch period. Several of the teachers pulled out lunches from home; others skipped lunch.

Many of the topics the group discussed were complex and fraught with emotion. For example, should students be taken to see another film that featured white people's struggle for black South African freedom? One of the teachers, himself a black South African, felt very strongly that the students should see the film. Others believed it misrepresented the political situation and overidealized the role of whites, while diminishing the role of blacks. There were moments of high tension as those with opposing opinions faced off.

Mary, who facilitated the meeting, turned the group repeatedly to their task. All members listened attentively to each other. Because this issue was not resolved, it was tabled for smaller meetings before or after school.

The teachers analyzed where individual kids were and what might best be done to facilitate for them. No student was disparaged or devalued in any way. The group broke amicably, with everyone reminding everyone else of what they had promised to do before next week's meeting.

THE HUMANITIES BLOCK

At 1:00, Kathryn's second group of students arrived for their two-hour humanities block. She greeted them as they came in, reminding some individuals of things they needed to do, asking others how things were going at home. On the right-hand side of the board, Kathryn had listed all the assignments that were due in and when.

Assignment 18: Final drafts I, II and III and all pre-drafts.

Assignment 18 drafts due Friday.

Assignment 18 was a mini-Exhibition — several pieces of work to demonstrate students' understanding of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. The students had choices in three categories. In the first section they were to go into the book to find an appropriate viewpoint from which to rewrite part of the text, or they could create a scene that had to have happened but which wasn't in the book. The second section asked the kids to deal with literary analysis — a comparison of characters or the use of

the naive narrator. The third assignment asked them to deal with the social issues presented in the book. One choice was to deal with Harper Lee's representation of blacks; another was to compare Lee's portrayal of blacks with Paul Lawrence Dunbar's poem "We Wear a Mask."

Kathryn began by asking for last night's homework. "I got it from some people but not from others. I can see evidence that you worked on drafts, but I haven't seen the results. There will be detention on Friday at lunchtime for those people who do not hand in all three sections. If you were absent, call somebody. I would like as much typed as possible. I'd like everybody to work on the computer, even my computer-shy people. Are there any questions? There will be no time in class on Friday to work on the assignments, so bring them finalized, ready to go. For the next hour, I'd like you to take out your writing files. This will be a silent writing period for one hour. I am available to anyone who who needs a conference. Who needs to work on computers?" Several hands went up. Kathryn took a huge ring of keys out of her purse and unlocked a small closet on one side of her room. The students rolled out four computers and a printer and quickly hooked them all up to portable outlet strips.

Some students went to work on their mini-Exhibitions; others continued work on stories or essays they'd been doing. Kathryn glanced at several students sitting together in the back of the room. "Michael, focus, focus." She walked over to three other students. "Come on. I want you to spread out. Three of you together is no good." Her tone was very brisk again, and she stayed right with them, prodding them until they scattered in different directions.

Three visitors walked in with Mary Wells. They were accompanied by a student who was working for the school's Community Education Center as part of his community service requirement. His job was to show visitors around the school. No one in the classroom paid any attention to them; visitors were commonplace in their school.

Kathryn leaned over one of the girls who was working on her conclusion to one part of the mini-Exhibition. She said that she was working on it because Kathryn wanted her to. Kathryn said, "I wanted you to? I wanted you to? What about you?" The girl grinned and then described where she'd been having difficulty.

The school's assistant principal walked in and pulled Kathryn aside for a minute. Kathryn had

attended several meetings dealing with problems of home-school communication. The assistant principal reported that they had made some progress but that it would be helpful if Kathryn could come back to the school that evening for another meeting to hear parents' concerns. Kathryn said she would be there.

During the interruption, the room was quiet and students continued to work. Those on the computers helped each other occasionally without disturbing the rest of the class. Kathryn moved immediately toward any students who looked as if they might disturb others. She was stopped by a student who asked, "What do you want me to put in here?"

"I can't answer that; you have to make that decision."

"No, but you put some editing notes here. Read 'em. I don't know what you mean."

Kathryn grinned and sat down to see what she'd suggested. She worked with this student for about five minutes. She looked up once and said, "If you are not working in a place that's comfortable, move to where you will be." Another student asked to go to the bathroom. Kathryn had a list going in her head. "After William." ♦

Two students sitting across the room from each other carried on a complete conversation without words. As discreetly as possible, they gestured back and forth. Kathryn missed this.

Tyrone was working on run-on's: "It's like two sentences where you got no period," he explained to me. "You gotta put in a period. I'm always looking for 'em." He waited for Kathryn to get to him. Tyrone was a ninth-grade student and smaller by a long shot than everyone else in the room. He wanted her to read one of his mini-Exhibition. In this section, he had decided to adopt the persona of one of the characters in *Mockingbird* and to rewrite a scene from that character's perspective. He'd chosen Boo Radley, the troubled adult in the story.

"Did I use the words right?"

Kathryn clarified. "You mean the vocabulary?"

"Yeah."

She sat beside him and asked him to read his piece to her while she looked on. He read, "'They are always talking about somebody. People have malevolent minds.' Is that right?"

"Hmmm. . . 'malevolent.' Yeah."

Tyrone looked pleased and resumed his reading. "' . . . malevolent minds. Some people can pass for good but not most.'"

Kathryn stopped him after several more sentences. "Okay, this word is used correctly but this one is not." She helped him search for a better word. They then discussed how he could indicate who was speaking. Kathryn said, "Well, you have two choices here. You can either write a monologue where only one character is present and speaking. Or you can put quotation marks around only that part which is spoken language."

Tyrone nodded, "Yeah, I see." They moved back into the text. Tyrone resumed reading. "'I see a few kids. Let me move from the window. I don't even know when was the last time I was outside walking around. My amble way is a shame.'"

They worked through the use of the word "amble." First they identified its part of speech as he used it. Then she had him identify its more common use as a verb. She encouraged him for using new words.

Tyrone read again, "'Gee, I'm so slow but I wonder what Atticus's kids are doing. I wonder what Atticus's kids are going to do next. I wish I wasn't in such a bewilderment.' Is that right?"

This time they worked through the meaning of the word "bewilder." Kathryn asked, "What is another word that means bewildered?"

"'Sly,' maybe?"

"Tell me more."

"Like, you don't know what they're going to do next?"

"How is Boo feeling at this particular moment?"

"Sad. He doesn't know what they're going to do next. He's like . . ."

"Well, what are you when you don't know what you're going to do next?"

"Wait. When you don't know what you're going to do next, you're confused."

"Yeah, there you go. 'Bewildered' means confused."

They discussed how he would change "bewilderment," and she congratulated him on experimenting and on his corrections.

She asked him to think about two more things — first, adding periods where he read the breaks in the text he'd written. She had him read it again and again to her so that he could hear where he put the breaks in.

Kathryn's other suggestion was about the introduction. "Suppose Rebecca and I hadn't read this book, and we walked in and picked up your paper and started to read it. How would we know what was going on?"

"Yeah, so I have to have an introduction, right?"

"Just identify what your paper is about so that, you know, someone who hasn't read the book can enjoy what this character is doing." She squeezed his shoulder with affection and congratulated him for his hard work. The conference took approximately eight minutes, during which time the class continued to work. Kathryn circulated for another five or ten minutes, then said, "Please wrap up what you are doing in the next five minutes. Those of you working on computers, don't forget to save your work and print out a draft. Tomorrow you can give me your drafts so that I can do some editing in order to make this deadline. It is very important that you finish the *Mockingbird* mini-Exhibition by Friday. We need to move on."

The room broke into activity. Two girls argued about racism. One said, "I don't think things are much different today." The other disagreed: "I never experience racism today." Her friend roared at her, "That's because you live with blacks! What do you expect? And there ain't any racism here in this school. But what about the other schools? What about South Africa? What are you thinking of, girl?" Kathryn told the class to take a five-minute break but to be back promptly because they had another important discussion coming up. The students dispersed, many continuing their discussions out in the hall.

When the students returned, Kathryn hustled them into their four work groups. Each group moved easily to their work areas. Kathryn handed out two actual court cases in which the judge had to determine bail. Each group got one case, then set about selecting a prosecuting attorney, a defending attorney, the accused, and the judge. The kids argued about who would take what part.

"You can't be the judge; you've already been a criminal. No criminals ever get to be judges!"

"I want to be the prosecuting attorney here so I can knock old Mike into jail for life!"

"Okay, okay, let's get serious. Who's going to do what?"

Once they had settled on their roles, they reviewed their cases and the circumstances that would influence the judge's decision to post bail or not. The student judge needed to determine whether or not bail might be paid and, if so, how much. Kathryn reminded them that they must be able to explain their decisions and the processes they used to arrive at the decision. Each of the groups went to work, given twenty minutes to deliberate.

One group argued at length about the constitutionality of bail.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: I don't think any bail should be posted. This criminal is a repeat offender. He's just going to go out and commit another robbery.

DEFENDING ATTORNEY: What difference does it make whether the judge posts bail or not? This man is a poor man — otherwise he wouldn't be robbing nothing! Where's he gonna get the money for bail? Bail serves the rich and defeats the poor. It's just another example of how the legal system hurts poor people. Is that constitutional?

CRIMINAL: I don't think so. I'm never going to raise any bail money. I got starving kids at home. (The "criminal" grinned.)

JUDGE: Bail is set so that criminals can come and go before they're proven guilty — it's "innocent until proven guilty" — so that's constitutional. Get off it. Starving kids! More like you got starving friends.

DEFENDING ATTORNEY: Yeah, but how can a poor person take advantage of that? And what does it look like for him? He has to hang out in the jail instead of being able to go to his job and everything.

PROSECUTING ATTORNEY: That's what you get for stealing. He didn't worry about other people's rights.

In each of the groups, students were leaning forward, arguing their points. Occasionally a burst of laughter or a loud groan emerged — responses to the roles the students easily adopted. The room was noisy but absorbed. Kathryn walked from group to group, sitting down for a few minutes, listening in, contributing to the conversations by asking students to clarify, then moving on.

When the allocated time had elapsed, Kathryn asked each of the judges to announce his or her decision and to justify it. Mike went first. He determined that the criminal must post \$15,000 bail. He set it that high because he didn't want the criminal on the streets and knew that the criminal couldn't raise that kind of money. Kathryn asked them to find the handout she had given them on bail. She asked them to locate the three factors a judge must consider in the posting of bail and then to analyze Mike's decision in light of those factors. The students began to argue about whether the bail was too low or too high. Emotions escalated, as did involvement. Kathryn did not participate other than to keep track of who would

speak next. "Billy, then Martha, then Jason." The discussion lasted for twenty minutes. One student stood up and walked around the room, pacing back and forth but engaged in the debate.

The assistant principal came in again, this time to check with Kathryn about an early dismissal: would it be all right for the kids to attend a meeting about school jackets? The student discussion continued despite Kathryn's diverted attention.

Kathryn asked that each student function as the judge in deciding on the second case. The rationale for their decision needed to be determined before they left for the day. The room quieted quickly as they set to writing for the remaining five minutes. When their time was up, Kathryn asked them to put their names on their papers and to tell her what they would be doing that evening and the next day in class. Several of the students reviewed their work agendas — some reading, some serious work on their mini-Exhibitions.

THE DAILY ADVISORY SESSION (PART TWO)

The room emptied except for those students who were in Kathryn's advisory. Gradually her full complement of fifteen assembled for the second half of that day's advisory. Her businesslike demeanor dropped again; she became relaxed, more like the students. Both she and the kids were excited; it was one of the students' birthday. He had been sent on some fictional errand so they could set up chips, cookies, and pop for a celebration.

The kids arranged things at whirlwind speed, then strained at the waiting. Two students hung out the doorway to announce his arrival. They all shouted and hollered and sang "Happy Birthday" to him as he appeared. He looked surprised, noted the goodies, looked pleased, and said, "Thank you." He sat down with his friends, grinning from ear to ear. The kids fell on the food. Mary walked in to say that her group's trip to the law firm had also been exceptional. She sat down with Kathryn, and they immediately resumed the discussion from the early morning meeting of the humanities team about whether instructional time was being eaten away. The kids merrily drank pop, ate chips, and belched.

Once the food had been devoured, the students gathered together on one side of the room and sang popular songs. They sat on the desks, close to each other, all wrapped up, arms and legs swinging.

Three of the boys moved into rap songs. As Mary left, Kathryn told me it had been difficult to get this group to bond. She wanted them to build a strong group for each other — to become special friends and a support group within the school. She reviewed her attempts to draw them together at the beginning of the year. She had tried discussions, but only a few would get involved. It didn't happen when they worked in their journals. It didn't happen when they read together. Finally she took them to the park one Friday afternoon, and they began to have fun. "It's the fun I want for them. I want them to have fun so that they can begin to share experiences."

She also understood that it was in this time that she learned the most about her students. She shared a good example. A year ago, one of the boys had performed a whole rap song. Kathryn had let him know that she felt cheated because his school work was so poor. If he could memorize all those words, just by listening, then he certainly had the ability to do the work and to learn. She had told him that he should be able to work harder. "This year," she noted, "he is doing much better. Just fine." She moved in to sing with the kids, then reassumed her brisk persona.

She explained the PSAT test, which was coming up soon. The kids groaned and asked how they could get out of it. She told them that they couldn't — that they needed to practice on these kinds of tests because they would have to take the SAT for college admission. The practice exams would help them to do better on the SAT. She gave them a letter to take home to their parents, snapped her fingers, clapped her hands, and marshaled people briskly into cleanup before they went.

The kids scooped up crumbs, shot baskets with plastic pop containers, and rearranged their desks. The room tumbled with coats, books, jibes, teasing, and dashing. They left ten minutes early to go to the special meeting about school jackets. Kathryn went with them after stopping one of the students to remind him, "NO excuses. Do you hear me? Get that homework done!"

After the announcements about the jackets, the kids streamed out of the auditorium. Kathryn and her colleagues traded insults and guffawed about the day's events, but there was a notable absence of derogatory comments about students. They seemed spent from the demands of their schedules. Several of them gathered on the way up the stairs to discuss the imminent evening meeting with the

parents. After trying to sort out the issues, they agreed to meet a few minutes early to get clear.

Back in her room, Kathryn worked with two students who had questions about their mini-Exhibitions. She then conferred with Micki about the day and about their plans for the next day's activities. Despite a continuing flow of students

and colleagues in and out of her room, she put on her coat at 5:00 to head home to make chicken soup for her daughter who was home sick; she would return two hours later to attend the parent meeting. As she walked out of the school, she linked arms with another teacher-friend while they shared the disappointments and triumphs of the day.

PART III

Reflections on Changing Practice

Kathryn's role of teacher-as-coach appeared to be significantly different from her earlier description of herself as a good "conventional" teacher. Activities in her classroom were unlike most of those I have observed in secondary schools. At no time did I observe a lesson that involved the whole group using a standard textbook nor was the room always quiet nor were the desks in rows. Kathryn was often nearly invisible in the classroom. She handed out no worksheets, she gave no multiple-choice tests — in fact, she gave no tests at all.¹⁰

At the same time, her students seemed to be engaged in serious work, and the quality of their responses appeared to be a significant cut above the rote answers so common in conventional classrooms. Even more importantly, I did not see any evidence of the deadly torpor that affects so many students in the classrooms in which I have taught or observed around the country. Their ability to ask and to discuss important questions on legal practices during the visit to the law firm was impressive. They were able to engage in serious discussions about emotionally loaded issues like justice and equality without taking the classroom apart. They were also struggling independently to master certain skills that they recognized as important. In addition, the relationship between Kathryn and the students was warm and caring but did not avoid the personal confrontation of tough issues like student motivation or personal problems.

What accounts for these differences? Kathryn is an intelligent and capable teacher but would be the first to admit that she is no more so than thousands of other teachers who labor in other classrooms across the country. The school is not enriched — there is no fancy technology, little new equipment. Indeed, by most standards, the school seemed run-down and impoverished. While students had chosen to attend this school, they seemed much like other heterogeneous groups of kids in large cities across the country.

Admittedly, Kathryn had demonstrated a predisposition to change over the years. She had participated in the Legal Outreach program, a Shake-

speare theater program, a program to reduce sex and race stereotypes, a poet-in-residence program, and a program that researched stress in kids' lives. She chose to participate in these programs because they provided more real-world experiences for her students and offered her a means by which to grow professionally. While she maintained traditional teaching methods, she took advantage of these programs even though it meant frequently rearranging her regular curriculum.

At the same time, it never occurred to her that she might want to disregard the major portion of her planned course of study or the methods she had used for so many years. Although she used different teaching methods when experimenting with new programs — group activities, role-playing, inquiry sessions — she did not incorporate these methods into her familiar repertoire of lessons. In this sense, Kathryn's experience was similar to that of most other teachers: recent research conducted on the effectiveness of staff development efforts has shown that programs developed by outsiders seldom change teachers' instructional repertoires in any significant or lasting way.¹¹

In order to investigate what had caused or enabled Kathryn to discard her more familiar teaching methods when she came to Westgate, I asked her to reflect on those conditions and circumstances that supported her, to dig around in the difficulties she encountered, and to see if she could distill any "essential learnings" that resulted from the work she had done.

SUPPORT IN THE CHANGE PROCESS

There were a number of conditions at Westgate that enabled Kathryn to experiment with less conventional teaching methods. Westgate provided a rich collaborative learning environment for teachers. "It was a great experience coming here. It was wonderful. I couldn't believe the people; they were so interesting. Every meeting I was in, there were so many ideas being tossed around: 'Why don't we try this? Why don't we do it this way? Here's how we'll do it — we'll take a

group of kids out to a museum, y'know . . . ' That's what it was like!"

The school had been set up to foster such collaboration among the adults in the school. Kathryn attended weekly faculty meetings to discuss the general concerns of the school and to share ideas. She talked about the fact that the faculty read things together. She had to do some catch-up reading — the series of books from *A Study of High Schools*¹² — and what she read made sense to her. She believed she had found a place that shared and articulated her particular educational philosophy. They continued to read and to discuss articles about education, about teaching and learning. The humanities team meetings and the house meetings provided two more regular opportunities for collaboration. She also noted that because they had the time to work together, if something wasn't quite right they'd just keep at it until it got better.¹³

Early on, Kathryn discovered that the people at Westgate respected her and her ideas. "A kid was going to be kicked out of Spanish the first week I was there, and she was in my group. I just couldn't understand why it was happening. And someone said to me, 'Well, what do you think should happen?' I said, 'First of all, I think we should speak to her family.' And someone else said, 'Well, go ahead, do it.' And I did, and things all turned around and I made it happen! I just went on my instinct, but I got support for the work I was doing individually with kids. I realized I didn't have to wait to find out how things were done around here. I could just do it." She added that people were glad to have her guide them in incorporating some of the stuff she'd done before, so she felt empowered to write and to recreate the curriculum. She felt that the school fostered shared leadership — that individuals were allowed to show their stuff and to shine.

Another circumstance that provided Kathryn with support in the change process was being allowed to start slow. She talked about teaching new things in combination with things she brought with her, so that she was on familiar ground at least some of the time. "We did geography, which I wasn't very knowledgeable about, but I knew the law stuff and was comfortable with the curriculum."

Going slow was coupled with the fact that she was working in an environment where the kids trusted her. "I think what helped was the

atmosphere of trust. The kids were terrific. They trusted me almost before I trusted them. There was material trust — like when I left a videotape out and when I loaned books to kids, and they returned them; that didn't happen in my other school. Then, the kids had also learned to trust adults. In my other school, when adults came into the room, kids would lean forward and kind of cover their work up. They didn't trust adults. Here, the kids are open; they see adults as people who can help. That's a big difference."

The fact that the staff encouraged her to try new things really pushed Kathryn along in the change process. "I remember in the first year I was here we were going to a trial, and we had the kids reading in a small book Mary had pulled together or written for the kids. She had written it on two levels — intermediate and advanced. And she suggested that we tell the kids there were two levels of the booklet and that they could choose whichever they liked. 'Wait a minute,' I thought; 'I know who can read at what level.' Mary said, 'Try it, and if you think something is wrong . . .'

"What about the kid who can do the harder one, but takes the easier one?"

"She said, 'It's all right. You can talk about it with the kid, but it may be the right thing for that kid at that moment, or you may want to say that he should read the harder one.' She trusted the process, but I didn't. It was ridiculous to me. But I tried it because she said to, and to trust her, and it was wonderful. For the most part, the kids picked the books that I would have given them. I mean, I would've really agreed." She told another anecdote about the anxiety she felt on their first outing. In her old school, she had counted the kids every couple of blocks, so on the way back from this outing, she was furiously trying to count the kids when Mary said to her, "Kathryn, it's okay. They're all here." Mary was right, and gradually Kathryn began to trust the methods and the techniques they were using because she was encouraged by her colleagues.

The fact that change was encouraged at all levels made a difference for her. She went several times to Rebecca, the principal, with an idea and each time was encouraged to try her ideas out. The administration fostered change as much as her colleagues did.

Kathryn stated clearly, though, that the greatest single factor that supported her in her change process was watching the benefits for kids. "What

really made me change was seeing how very powerfully new approaches moved the kids. I saw those kids really handling the material, digging in, very confident. It embarrasses me now, but I didn't always believe that students could handle tough, sophisticated work, that they could do research, handle tough discussions, and work their own writing over several times, mostly because I didn't ever see them do it. Since I've been here, I have watched students become champions of provocative issues. I've watched them read, ask for more information, and read some more. Then I've watched them struggle to write what they feel, what they believe, instead of the teacher-pleaser kind of stuff I used to get. And these kids belong to the same population of kids I worked with before, the same." Her voice trailed off as if she were disappearing into her old classroom, looking for past students she might be better able to help now.

DIFFICULTIES IN THE MIDST OF CHANGE

Kathryn was far from a Pollyanna who glossed over the difficulty of change. She talked about her own fears after she had been hired and as she struggled to change. "I felt scared to death. I mean, I was tense the summer before I went to work. I went to a meeting with one of the house groups; we had to decide what we were going to do that first week of school right down to the minute. It was so scary to organize every minute. The parameters were bigger. It's quite a responsibility to decide what you're going to teach, to decide what the kids should learn. You're grappling with the real nitty-gritty: What do we want kids to get out of it? What's important here? How do we do that? At the pit of my stomach was the fear that I wasn't smart enough, that I didn't know enough to make these decisions for kids. I had not had the opportunity before, and because these decisions had always been made for me somehow, I doubted my own abilities.

"Another thing was that I was good at standing up in front of a class. And I was used to that. Just give me a textbook and I'll do great. So I was scared. Was I good enough? Would I be able to make this change? I was really afraid that I wouldn't have control, and I wouldn't be on top. I was afraid that I couldn't do it in a way that would really help the kids. This was for other people who really knew about learning styles, really knew a lot more than me."

Mary Wells, who had been a major source of support to Kathryn during her first year, confirmed that Kathryn had really struggled with the control issue and that she vacillated between her old conventional teaching style and the coaching stance. Kathryn still felt uncomfortable, embarrassed, remembering severe moments of panic, moments when she was afraid that things were out of control and when she felt that she would be judged harshly because of the noise and the disorderliness of the students' learning.

"I remember the first day when I met the kids and they called me by my first name. It blew my mind — the whole thing — the whole school calling each other by first names. That first day, I took the kids upstairs and they were noisy and my old training came out: 'All right, now that's enough noise on the stairs.' I used my sternest teacher-voice and barked out directions. It was the part of me that believed that a quiet school is a good school, and that I would look as if I couldn't handle the kids if they weren't in rows and silent. When we came to the room, I had assigned seats for everybody. The kids told me later, when everybody relaxed, 'Kathryn, you were really something — you yelled at us on the way up to the classroom. All we were doing was talking.' I went through a number of tense moments like that. Those memories embarrass me now; I don't like to talk about them because I think, 'What did my colleagues think while I was barking at the kids like that?'"

Collaborating with others posed a number of problems. "One difficulty was that I was working with people with all different experiences. That's hard." Frequently they had different ideas about things. They argued a good deal about standards and grading and how they might best measure kids' success. They argued about the value of field trips, for instance. She recalled a period early on where they split right in half. Half of the group did not want to go outside the school, while the others did. She felt passionately that kids learn better when they get first-hand experience, and she felt angry with her dissenting colleagues. Because they had agreed to teach the same things, they couldn't just close their own classroom doors or open them and go out according to their own preferences. They argued for weeks, which left them all tense, exhausted, and divided. Finally, they reached a compromise: they agreed to experiment. They would try a couple of field trips and then reassess their value.

She observed that they hadn't really known how to work together; they were unsure how to resolve conflict, and they didn't know how to share the work load. They had to practice being collaborative. The challenges in collaborating with adults stemmed from trying to figure out how to ensure adequate discussion on controversial topics. Furthermore, each of the members of the various teams had different strengths and weaknesses, and they had to work at juggling that.

It was also difficult for them to turn work off. Kathryn frequently talked on the telephone at night to her colleagues about their projects and plans, and they talked earnestly at every possible moment during the school day.

In addition, participation in the governance of the school, in the nurturing of kids, in the determination of the curriculum, all took time, which was in scarce supply. Unfortunately, their school day did not grow, nor did the numbers of days in the week. She felt constant pressure to find more time to do all of the things that needed doing. She sighed while she explained that even though she had fewer students, as a generalist concerned with their total well-being, she needed to spend more time with each of them. And, while she gained a half a day a week to work on the humanities curriculum with her colleagues, the issues they were debating — like what it is that students really need to know — were complex and required careful consideration, not to mention the time to air diverse views and opinions. Shortage of time was a constant frustration.

Changed relationships with students posed additional challenges. She had never had to worry about getting students to bond into a cohesive working group before and found that she had to cast around for ways to make this happen. She had to work more frequently with parents, which was initially unappealing. Now that she was in the thick of it, she believed that she needed to forge even stronger bonds with the home, as well as with outside community support agencies, in order to help the kids.

Another unsettling and difficult insight she gained once she had embarked upon the road to change was that she would never be done honing her skills as a teacher. She realized that she would never "arrive," that she would never know everything she needed to know in order to be good at what she did. "I don't think I know enough. I have to learn right along with the kids, and that's

been a very difficult transition, to feel comfortable with that. I worked in a system for years that encouraged me to believe that I had to know it all, that I should be the definitive voice of knowledge.

"Another major challenge is that you're never off, you just can't sit down and say, 'Open your workbook to page 40 and do it.'" Kathryn noted that frequently there were no breaks for her, and that she was often unaware of how fast she was moving. By the end of the week, she was simply exhausted. "Teaching this way requires an enormous amount of energy."¹⁴

On a more personal note, Kathryn mentioned on several occasions that her new job brought challenges and difficulties at home. It impinged on her family life, and she frequently felt conflicted about that. There were more meetings, more phone calls to be made from home in the evening, and a good deal more time spent at school. In addition, she had been invited to travel around the country to speak to other groups about the kinds of changes she was attempting with her colleagues. While she loved the travel, it added new complexities.

Despite these difficulties, Kathryn believed that she was on the right track. The benefits of changing to a teacher-as-coach stance clearly outweighed for her whatever distress she'd gone through in the process. She expressed those benefits in terms of her "essential learnings."

ESSENTIAL LEARNINGS

Over the course of my week-long visit, Kathryn thought out loud about what she had learned over the past three years and what had been most important to her in her own change process. By nature a reflective person, she had given this a good deal of thought, but clearly the most essential thing for her had been "learning to trust kids and their own voices" as integral to the teaching/learning process. By this she meant that she had learned to move from center stage, where she did most of the talking, to the wings, so that the students could use and develop their own voices. This required an enormous shift in educational philosophy and in classroom practice.

She talked about the benefits of watching students grow over time, since she now worked with one group of students for two consecutive years. Previously, she had worked with only single-age groups — ninth or tenth graders — and she had only had them for one year (unless they ended up in

another class later on, which sometimes happened, not by design but because of scheduling). Now that she had students for a longer period of time, she felt better able to help them. She told about Miguel. "Last year, Miguel wouldn't speak. He actually sat in class like one shy little kid who never is allowed with the rest of the kids. But through the year, he gained confidence. I worked with him, quietly, on the side. All of a sudden, halfway through, his hand was up during the class discussions. He would read a little bit. It was halting and it was difficult, but he did take the chance and today, at the law firm, you know, he talked! That's a teacher's dream. To see a kid grow like that."

She noted that her professional growth had been fostered at this school in some very important ways. She had grown as a result of the meetings where the faculty read and discussed educational issues together. She believed that the administration provided them with the kind of leadership that encouraged experimentation and established and modeled a strong commitment to students and to learning for both students and adults. She had grown from visiting with people who came to the school to examine their practices, from going out to make presentations to other schools, from the opportunity to collaborate with her colleagues.

THE COMMON PRINCIPLES

Kathryn felt that the nine Common Principles had played a major part in the reorganization of instruction in her room. She and her colleagues did not consciously refer to the Common Principles, but they were embedded in both the structure of the school and in its professional culture. While a new teacher might not be able to cite the principles, the principles shaped their work. As a guiding philosophy, the principles offered the teachers at this school a focal point from which to examine and rearrange instructional practices. She believed that their examination against the backdrop of the principles had pushed them further into restructuring.

For instance, the fourth principle states that "teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent." The school stressed personalization of instruction by organizing the schedule so teachers each took responsibility for a small number of students and met with them for

a one-hour advisory each day. Kathryn saw a variety of purposes for the advisory: it provided support for individual kids while at school; it provided a connecting point between the family and the school; it was a place where adults and a group of kids could grow together.

Moreover, Kathryn had only seventeen students in one Humanities class, sixteen in the other. "Small classes have afforded me the opportunity to work closely with the students. Being 'let in' to individual learning styles and paces has enabled me to set goals and evaluate progress in a meaningful way. This takes time. Interaction with small classes is essential to this process."

Westgate teachers had two hour-long interviews with each student's parents each year, which teachers scheduled at the parents' convenience. Phone calls were frequent, as were additional conferences scheduled around specific issues. Each of these steps helped the teachers to know their students better so they could build programs for them which were suited to them.

The increased amount of time Kathryn had with her students also caused her to see them differently. "I see each kid as a whole, not just in terms of reading ability, so I can connect with them better. I think they see me as someone who listens. I think they see me as someone who will stimulate them. I think they see me as someone who will expect them to work hard. I like spending a lot of time together. The closeness is very positive. I think it really helps me to step back when I should step back and to move in when I should move in. It allows for a continuity of helping. Those kids are like my family now. Do you know what I mean? They've come with me, we've grown together."

The fifth Common Principle suggests that the dominant metaphor of the school should be student-as-worker. Kathryn and her colleagues used that principle to evaluate what part students played in their classrooms. Kathryn described her role as teacher since she had come to this school: "I'm still the organizer and still the director. But my students' thoughts and their participation is primary, it is central. And how they work with each other is also central. I am not in the center, not standing in front of them teaching a lesson. I have gathered the material and provide direction for what we will talk about, but they must bite into the material, and as the discussion gets going, they are more in charge. I no longer see learning as someone telling you something. I've learned a lot

about how people learn, and it really has to come from within. If the student isn't plugged in personally, not much can happen. I think my job is more to plug students in, to find some way for each kid to do something with the material that means something."

Designing lessons in which students are actively engaged was a very different task from creating teacher-directed activities. For instance, in the bail activity that Kathryn's students did, she had to adapt material from the Legal Outreach program to create a lesson that provided meaningful roles for four people. She had to write the directions for each role. She had to generate the substance of the activity, and then she had to design an activity so that she could check each student's understanding.

Kathryn believed that student participation was characterized by inquiry and heightened activity. "I focus on what questions the kids are asking, and I try to ask questions which will stimulate them. They're not in search of answers. Actually, I feel we're more in search of questions. Everything is a question. The whole classroom process is more active — even if we're sitting here having a discussion, it's more interactive. It's the kids who leap around, doing the talking and thinking and sharing."

The idea of student-as-worker significantly influenced Kathryn's role as well. She felt a much greater necessity to ensure meaningful work for her students, which forced her to spend more time moving from student to student in individual consultation sessions. It forced her to examine her own participation in discussion. She realized that she needed to contribute less to the substance of the discussion but to provide more assistance on the skills of discussion. Thus, she asked clarifying questions and demonstrated for the students how to listen respectfully and how to take turns.

One more example illustrates a significant benefit for Kathryn's change process that accrued from the Common Principles. The eighth principle

states that teachers need to be generalists, but Kathryn came to this position trained as an English teacher, a specialist. In order to function as a computer teacher, history teacher, counselor, geography teacher, and civics teacher, to mention just a few, she had to examine her strengths and her skills, she had to stretch, to learn new things. And she got to share her particular expertise with her colleagues. The fact that they were functioning as generalists bound the humanities team members together more closely, in that they had to help each other. "One thing that happened as I changed was that I got to use my strengths and I got a big bang out of that."

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At the end of an exhausting week. I asked Kathryn whether, after three years, she felt that she was back into settled practice, whether she could relax a little, put her feet up, pull out a trusty lesson plan. She answered with great clarity.

"For eighteen years, I almost knew the pages of the text by heart. I don't know the pages now. There are things I don't know. There's a lot I don't know — about material, about subject matter that I'm teaching or working with. I don't feel settled because there's so much more to do. Nope, I'm not settled. I did a lot more group work the second year than the first. This year, I'm doing more individualization. I'm going to work on that part of it. I have to do it — for kids like Tommy [the learning-disabled student]. I know he learns better that way."

She smiled and said that once she got better at individualizing, she'd move on to something else, constantly building her repertoire of coaching techniques.

"You know, I like this. The kids just come along with me. I take new things with me to each class and I explore new ground, and it's okay with them. Their voices get stronger every day. I learn how to trust their great capacity, and we learn together."

NOTES

¹ This case study was undertaken to explore a teacher's change as she attempted to improve the quality of the educational experience her students received in her classroom. The data was gathered during the 1989-90 school year. I shadowed Kathryn for one week, interviewed her, her students, and her colleagues and took extensive observational notes. In the process of writing the case, several return visits and interviews were conducted. Kathryn and I worked together in the development of this case; she feels that it accurately reflects her journey to more student-centered teaching.

This paper is intended to be descriptive; for an analysis of the circumstances described herein, see Wasley, "Stirring the Chalkdust: Three Teachers in the Midst of Change" (Studies on Teacher Change, No. 4, Coalition of Essential Schools, Brown University, 1990).

² Kathryn and I struggled to find terms that would describe her past teaching practice as well as her changed practice. She preferred the term "conventional" to "traditional" because she felt it was less pejorative. "Conventional" here refers to a particular kind of teaching that has received considerable attention throughout the history of schooling. The predominate image of a conventional teacher suggests that he or she is a deliverer of instructional services and students are empty vessels ready to be filled with important information. It is important to note that there are both brilliant and dismal conventional teachers. Good conventional teachers employ a number of teaching strategies, from Socratic dialogues to lectures to activities in which students must demonstrate their comprehension. Poor conventional teachers tend to use fewer techniques and to do so with uninspired skill. Literature, television, and contemporary films abound with examples. Good conventional teachers are typified by Mr. Chips, Miss Brooks, Mrs. Zajac in *Among Schoolchildren*, and Robin Williams's role in *Dead Poets Society*. Examples of dismal conventional teachers can be found in the works of Charles Dickens and Mark Twain and in the movies *Teachers* and *Ferris Bueller's Day Off*.

"Teacher-as-coach" describes a teaching stance quite different from conventional teaching,

although teachers from either stance might on occasion use similar techniques. The distinction, therefore, is a complex one. "Teacher-as-coach" requires that the teacher's role change from the primary deliverer of knowledge to a facilitator of student learning. Students are not seen as empty vessels waiting to be filled with facts, but rather as novices capable of mastering complex skills and areas of knowledge if guided through the actual processes. Like athletic coaches, music teachers, and drama coaches, teacher-coaches work with individual students or groups of students, helping each to move from their own current level of competence to heightened ability. A teacher-coach functions as a facilitator of student learning by prompting and provoking and by demonstrating problem-solving techniques with students.

³ The nine Common Principles emerged from A Study of High Schools (1979-84), conducted by Theodore R.Sizer and his colleagues. The principles are a set of commonsense guidelines designed to help schools focus on the essential mission of schooling — to help students learn to use their minds well. These principles are described in the appendix to Sizer's *Horace's Compromise* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1985) and are presented in Appendix A to this paper.

The Coalition of Essential Schools is a partnership between Brown University and schools across the country that have joined together to re-examine secondary education to make student learning the central focus of schooling.

⁴ "Student-as-worker" implies that knowledge is constructed by the learner, not handed over by the teacher. Further, it implies that the goal of classroom activity is to teach students to be self-regulating and enterprising learners; that is, the work they do must help them to develop the skills to learn — the skills of question formulation, investigation, synthesis, and analysis, among others. The work students are involved in must be educative with a clear performance objective in mind, so that the larger purpose of any given activity is to help the student make independent choices. For a fuller discussion, see Grant Wiggins, "The Metaphor of Student-as-Worker" (Coalition of Essential Schools, Brown University, 1988).

⁵ The school was divided into "houses," each house comprising five or six advisory groups — one teacher and approximately fifteen students per

group. The house system guaranteed that each student had a smaller, more personal community in which to work. The house planned several whole-group activities each year, and the house teachers met once a week in order to plan events and to communicate on students' progress.

⁶ The term "generalist" appears in principle #8. It suggests that in schools which put student learning first, teachers must take on multiple responsibilities rather than perceiving themselves simply as subject-area specialists. As generalists, teachers develop curriculum that makes connections among disciplines and between the learning world in school and the world at large. As generalists, they also function as coaches, counselors, and managers, taking greater responsibility for the whole school.

⁷ Essential questions are an important part of rethinking the curriculum in Essential schools. Rather than being organized around right answers, essential questions become the centerpiece around which curriculum is built. Essential questions go to the heart of the discipline, they do not have obvious, single right answers, they require that students engage in higher-order thinking skills, and they allow for personalized interest. For a more complete discussion, see Grant Wiggins, "Creating a Thought-Provoking Curriculum," *American Educator*, Winter 1987.

⁸ "Mini-Exhibitions" are an adaptation of principle #6, which encourages schools to find alternative ways in which students might meet the requirements for a diploma. A graduation Exhibition is a culminating public demonstration of the student's mastery of a limited number of skills and areas of knowledge chosen by the faculty as essential to the school's program. Kathryn and her colleagues developed mini-Exhibitions, exercises which allowed students to demonstrate mastery at the end of a unit of study. The end-of-the-year mini-Exhibitions in humanities would require that students demonstrate their understanding of the essential question, What is justice?

⁹ Bloom's *Taxonomy* has been interpreted as a linear scale of learning activities that moves from the least difficult (knowledge acquisition) to the most difficult (synthesis of material). See Benjamin Bloom, *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives*, vol. II (New York: D. McKay, 1956).

¹⁰ Kathryn noted that while I did not observe any of these conventional methods, she certainly used them on occasion; for instance, she quizzed students on their reading. However, she used the quizzes to stimulate discussion rather than for grading.

¹¹ The full texts of these studies report the dismal results of costly staff development programs in recent years. The conditions in which teachers work seem particularly resistant to significant change. See Michael Fullan, *The Meaning of Educational Change* (New York: Teachers College Press, 1989); L. Lambert, "Staff Development Redesign," *Phi Delta Kappan*, May 1988, pp. 665-68; and J. Warren Little, "Assessing the Prospects for Teacher Leadership," in *Building a Professional Culture in Schools*, ed. Ann Lieberman (New York: Teachers College Press, 1988).

¹² The books that resulted from this study are *Horace's Compromise*, by Theodore R.Sizer (1985), *The Shopping Mall High School*, by Arthur G. Powell et al. (1985), and *The Last Little Citadel*, by Robert L. Hampel (1986), all published by Houghton Mifflin.

¹³ Mary Wells described the power of the team's collaboration. "Getting people together in groups to share ideas is a liberation, and what it does is unleash people's possibilities, excitement, intellectual growth, in a way that they never experienced before as professionals. . . . It's the process of transformation that keeps the groups alive and makes people risk and connect in ways they never have before. If teachers use their minds instead of staying behind teacher-directed activities and working in isolation, the flip becomes true — they become student-directed and more open to thinking, learning, challenging, and questioning."

¹⁴ Mary pointed out the multiple layers of change in which the teachers were engaged. She believed that this layering was the greatest challenge they faced. Moving from teacher-as-deliverer-of-information to student-as-worker and teacher-as-coach was one layer. "Another tremendous leap is from deliverer-of-instruction who kicks kids out of class if they are disruptive to teacher-as-problem-solver with individual kids. Being a partner in the responsibility for the success of each kid is radically different from 'Take it; it's here if you want it.'"

APPENDIX A

The Common Principles

1. The school should focus on helping adolescents learn to use their minds well. Schools should not attempt to be "comprehensive" if such a claim is made at the expense of the school's central intellectual purpose.
2. The school's goals should be simple: that each student master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. While these skills and areas will, to varying degrees, reflect the traditional academic disciplines, the program's design should be shaped by the intellectual and imaginative powers and competencies that students need, rather than necessarily by "subjects" as conventionally defined. The aphorism "Less Is More" should dominate: curricular decisions should be guided by the aim of thorough student mastery and achievement rather than by an effort merely to cover content.
3. The school's goals should apply to all students, while the means to these goals will vary as those students themselves vary. School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of adolescents.
4. Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent. Efforts should be directed toward a goal that no teacher have direct responsibility for more than 80 students. To capitalize on this personalization, decisions about the details of the course of study, the use of students' and teachers' time and the choice of teaching materials and specific pedagogies must be unreservedly placed in the hands of the principal and staff.
5. The governing practical metaphor of the school should be student-as-worker rather than the more familiar metaphor of teacher-as-deliverer-of-instructional-services. Accordingly, a prominent pedagogy will be coaching, to provoke students to learn how to learn and thus to teach themselves.
6. Students entering secondary school studies are those who can show competence in language and elementary mathematics. Students of traditional high school age but not yet at appropriate levels of competence to enter secondary school studies will be provided intensive remedial work to assist them quickly to meet these standards. The diploma should be awarded upon a successful final demonstration of mastery for graduation — an "Exhibition." This Exhibition by the student of his or her grasp of the central skills and knowledge of the school's program may be jointly administered by the faculty and by higher authorities. As the diploma is awarded when earned, the school's program proceeds with no strict age grading and with no system of "credits earned" by "time spent" in class. The emphasis is on the students' demonstration that they can do important things.
7. The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation ("I won't threaten you but I expect much of you"), of trust (until abused) and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity and tolerance). Incentives appropriate to the school's particular students and teachers should be emphasized, and parents should be treated as essential collaborators.
8. The principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first (teachers and scholars in general education) and specialists second (experts in but one particular discipline). Staff should expect multiple obligations (teacher-counselor-manager) and a sense of commitment to the entire school.
9. Ultimate administrative and budget targets should include, in addition to total student loads per teacher of eighty or fewer pupils, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, competitive salaries for staff and an ultimate per pupil cost not to exceed that at traditional schools by more than 10 percent. To accomplish this, administrative plans may have to show the phased reduction or elimination of some services now provided students in many traditional comprehensive secondary schools.

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